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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 SEOUL 000271

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [KPAO](#) [KS](#) [US](#)  
SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; FEBRUARY 22, 2010

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DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

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According to an (ROK) Defense Ministry official, the ROK and the  
U.S. plan to conclude bilateral talks this year on the possible  
overseas redeployment of USFK. (JoongAng)

Michael Schiffer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian  
and Pacific Security Affairs, said that he is confident that the  
transfer of wartime operational control from the U.S. to the ROK  
will occur in 2012. (Dong-a)

According to a recent opinion survey by the Korea Institute for  
National Unification, 56 percent of ROK citizens have a negative  
view of North Korea. This is the first time since 1998 that a

majority has viewed the North unfavorably. In addition, 87 percent of respondents favored another inter-Korean summit. (Chosun, Dong-a, Hankyoreh, Segye, Seoul)

#### INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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According to diplomatic sources, the U.S. has been delaying issuing a visa for North Korea's Chief Nuclear Negotiator Kim Kye-gwan for the third consecutive week; Kim was invited by a U.S. academic organization late last month to attend a seminar slated to be held in New York in March. (JoongAng)

According to the Kyodo News Agency, Stephen Bosworth, Special Representative for North Korea Policy, is considering visiting China next month to discuss the resumption of the Six-Party Talks with Chinese officials. (JoongAng, Segye)

#### MEDIA ANALYSIS

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##### -N. Korea

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All ROK media on Saturday carried reports quoting a military official as saying that North Korea has reinforced its artillery capacity along its disputed Yellow Sea border with the ROK by adding dozens of 240-mm multiple rocket launchers (MRLs) with a maximum

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range of 60km. According to media reports, this is the first time that the North has deployed MRLs near the disputed sea border.

The ROK media also reported that North Korea designated eight "naval firing zones" in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea. It is the fourth time that the North has declared such zones since Jan. 25.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo quoted military authorities as saying yesterday: "As of Feb. 21, there is no unusual military activity detected in the North."

Citing diplomatic sources, right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo today carried an inside-page report that the U.S. has been delaying issuing a visa for the North's Chief Nuclear Negotiator Kim Kye-gwan for the third consecutive week. According to the report, Kim was invited by a U.S. academic organization late last month to attend a seminar slated to be held in New York March 3 - 4. The report quoted a source as saying: "The U.S. position is that the chief North Korean negotiator's visit to the U.S. should be (for) a government-level contact between the two countries. (His visit) will be possible only if the North makes clear its willingness to return to the Six-Party Talks."

JoongAng and conservative Segye Ilbo replayed a Feb. 20 report by the Kyodo News Agency that Stephen Bosworth, Special Representative for North Korea Policy, is considering visiting China next month to discuss resuming the Six-Party Talks with Chinese officials. The report quoted a source in the U.S. as saying: "Even if Bosworth visits China, chances are slim that the U.S. may agree to further inducements to draw the North back to the Six-Party Talks."

#### FEATURES

U.S. "CONFIDENT OF 2012 TRANSFER OF WARTIME OPERATIONAL CONTROL"  
(Dong-a Ilbo, February 22, 2010, Front Page)

By Washington Correspondent Ha Tae-won

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Schiffer

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Michael Schiffer said on February 19 in reference to the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON), "We are in continuous discussion about strengthening the ROK's military

strength for the wartime OPCON transfer, and as of now, (we) are confident of the 2012 transfer of wartime operational control."

As to the ROK's possible participation in the U.S.-led Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) plan, Schiffer noted, "It has long been discussed between both authorities, and cooperation is now ongoing," stressing, "Given North Korea's missile threat, the BMD plan is absolutely needed in this region."

During a February 19 exclusive interview with Dong-a Ilbo, which was held in his office on the fifth floor of the Pentagon in Washington, Deputy Assistant Secretary Schiffer stated, "It is an important asset of the alliance to know what (missile defense) capability the ROK wants to develop and the specifics of the plan."

The Deputy Assistant Secretary, who is in charge of Korean Peninsula affairs at the Pentagon, said of the North Korean threat, "Although the U.S. is not within striking distances of North Korea's short-range or mid-range missiles, we consider those missiles, too, as a threat to the U.S."

MOST S. KOREANS FEEL THREATENED BY THE NORTH  
(Chosun Ilbo, February 22, Page 2)

By Reporter Lee Yong-su

Some 56 percent of South Koreans have a negative view of North Korea and 70 percent feel threatened by the North's nuclear arms, a poll

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suggests. But 87 percent support holding another inter-Korean summit.

The Korea Institute for National Unification polled 1,000 people. Of the 56.4 percent who had a negative view of the North, 43.8 percent saw the North as dangerous and 12.6 percent as an enemy.

Of the 38.3 percent of respondents who saw the North positively, 22.5 percent said the ROK should cooperate with (the North) and 15.8 percent said it deserves support.

It was the first time since 1998 that a majority (of South Koreans) had a negative view of North Korea.

"The percentage of people with a negative view of the North in the latest poll is now as high as before the Sunshine Policy," said Choi Jin-wook, a senior researcher at KINU. "It seems that the poll reflects how people were affected" by the North's second nuclear test, long-range rocket launch, and an inter-Korean skirmish in the West Sea last year.

Some 90.8 percent of respondents said there is a "slim" chance that the North will abandon its nuclear weapons.

Some 53.1 percent believe that there has been no big progress in inter-Korean relations while 15.8 percent said that relations had deteriorated. Some 51.5 percent hold the North responsible for the worsening relations.

A vast majority, or 80.3 percent, of respondents approved of the ROK demand to investigate the fatal shooting of an ROK tourist at Mt. Kumgang resort in July 2008 and to require an assurance that (North Korea will prevent) similar incidents as preconditions for resuming package tours to Mt. Kumgang.

But more than half or 51.4 percent called for dialogue with the North.

The poll was conducted by Millward Brown Media Research for KINU on Nov. 9-30 last year.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

CORRESPONDENT IN AFGHANISTAN: EVEN THE DIRT HOUSES ARE DILAPIDATED;  
KABUL IS AN EXHIBITION OF "WAR TRAGEDY"  
(Chosun Ilbo, February 22, 2010, Front Page)

By Correspondent Lee Ha-won from Bagram Airbase in Kabul

Afghanistan is tired of its three-decade-long war. Since the Soviet Union's invasion in 1979, Afghanistan has been involved in a civil war for a long time and then at war with the Taliban, seeing its territory, about three times as large as the Korean Peninsula, devastated.

As the first Korean reporter participating in the U.S. military's "Embed Program," I left the Afghan capital Kabul for the U.S. Bagram Air Base on February 20. Earth houses along the streets were mostly dilapidated. About an hour later, when our vehicle stopped for a while, a man in his twenties quickly came up to us out of nowhere. At that moment, my hair bristled up at the thought, "Am I going to die in a terrorist bombing attack?" My heart inside the 10-kilogram body armor almost seemed to stop. While passing by the front of the car, the man continuously stared at me. Although a bomb did not go off, I could not let my guard down thinking that a bomb attack will take place without any warning.

Wherever our vehicle stopped on its way, children with dirty faces ran toward us. Six- and seven-year-old children, much younger than my son, reached out their rough hands for money. There was a look of appeal in their eyes.

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All over Kabul, a war-ravaged city which I looked around a day earlier, bombed-out remnants of buildings were seen. Local residents' earth houses looked as if they would collapse at any moment. U.S. and ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) Commander General Stanley McChrystal, who had an exclusive interview with me at the ISAF headquarters in Kabul on February 20, showed great resolve.

He stressed, "The war in Afghanistan is neither the U.S.'s war nor France's war nor Korea's war. It is a war for the sake of the Afghan people," adding that he felt grateful to the ROK for its decision to dispatch troops despite security concerns.

The Bagram Air Base, about 60 kilometers north of Kabul, reminded me of a large construction site. Huge construction vehicles appeared to outnumber tanks and military aircraft. At the base, where tens of thousands of people are stationed, all vehicles and soldiers were covered with dust.

When I arrived at Bagram media center, a U.S. soldier handed me a 9-page pledge. A "release from liability" form caught my attention.

"I recognize and agree that covering combat and military operations can be dangerous and may cost me my life." I was hesitant for a moment but, after a deep breath, I signed it.

This soldier said, "You will stay at "Hotel California." I followed him, saying to myself, "There is a hotel in U.S. bases even at times of a war." However, I found a wooden prefabricated barrack with (a sheet of) paper written "Hotel California" flying in the wind. I was assigned to a room called Sacramento, California State's capital. I will stay here for a week and report on Bagram.

GEN. MCCHRYSTAL: "AFGHANS WANT TALIBAN TO BE DEFEATED... MOSHTARAK OPERATION IS SUCCESSFUL"  
(Chosun Ilbo, February 22, Page 3)

By Washington Correspondent Lee Ha-won

"The Afghan war is not a war of the U.S., France or the ROK. This war is for the Afghans. The U.S. needed (international) help during the war of independence and the ROK did during the Korean War. As we needed outside help then, Afghanistan does now. "

In an exclusive interview with Chosun Ilbo on February 19, Gen. McChrystal, the U.S. top commander in Afghanistan and the commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) stressed the need for international assistance to Afghanistan. During a meeting at Gen. McChrystal's office in Kabul, the commander showed his confidence in the Afghan War by saying that, at a recent international conference on Afghanistan held in London, all of the (conference participants) reaffirmed their joint commitment (to Afghanistan). Regarding the Marjah offensive which recently started in southern Afghanistan, Gen. McChrystal said, "Even though we lost (some of) our soldiers and local residents suffered damage, this operation is being carried out in an extraordinary and smooth way, causing relatively small damage."

Q. What is the implication of the Marjah offensive which began February 13?

This operation is not limited to the Marjah region. It is being staged across Helmand province, the southern part of Afghanistan. Over the past two years, this area has been beset by insecurity. Our aim is to get the Afghans out of the Taliban's control. Local residents want to be liberated from the Taliban.

Q. What is your assessment of (the U.S.'s) operation so far?

The operation has been very successful and is still under way. We have to be cautious in making assessments. Strategically, it is important to demonstrate to the international community that

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Afghanistan itself is capable of guiding, steering and leading this operation.

Q. The "Moshtarak" strategy involving two marine soldiers and one Afghan security force member- which means "together" in Dari- is gaining attention.

"We have strived to establish a strategy that involves Afghan security forces and allied forces. We live together, fight together and share responsibilities. Not only U.S. forces but also British forces and Danish forces are cooperating with the Afghan security forces."

Q. Some analysts think that the U.S.'s strategy for the Taliban has changed. If the Taliban changes its position, is the U.S. willing to cooperate with it?

"This is what the Afghan government and people should decide. We just provide security assistance to Afghanistan. Afghan President Hamid Karzai delivered a clear message that if the Taliban seeks to live under the Afghan constitution, it must not resort to any violence, and this will lead (the Taliban) to live peacefully together with the Afghans. "

Q. When will the additional 30,000 U.S. soldiers President Barack Obama promised to send be completely dispatched?

"They will be sent by this summer. Two units are already engaging in the Marjah offensive. A total of 38,000 U.S. soldiers will be deployed. The allied forces also pledged to send 8000 soldiers. "

Q. How do you define "victory" in the Afghan war?

"When the Afghan people (can) make free choices for their own future, we (will) consider it a victory. It is when they freely decide their government, engage in economic activities, and are equipped with self-defense capabilities."

Q. What is the most important (factor in defining "victory"?)

"Above all, public order and security should be ensured. After that, they can decide their own future. The government's control should be strengthened. Control at regional levels nationwide should also be firm. Corruption should be eliminated, and civil servants should do their work."

1Q. President Obama said in his State of the Union Address, "In Afghanistan, we're increasing our troops and training Afghan security forces so they can begin to take the lead in July of 2011." Will it be possible?

"We think that it is possible. During his inauguration last year, Afghanistan President Karzai also expressed a desire to establish public security as early as possible. The Afghan government is already taking the lead in that work. We will also actively support it."

1Q. There is some criticism that the U.S. is still failing to win the heart of local residents. Do you agree with it?

"It is not a matter of whether I agree or not. In order to deal with insurgents in a war situation, we should understand each other. The allied forces should understand Afghanistan's culture and language among other things. This is a war for the Afghan people, not a war hostile to them."

1Q. In the ROK, there is still lingering anxiety over the war in Afghanistan. Some people say, "Why does the ROK support a U.S. war?"

"This war does not carry only one meaning. This is a global war on terrorism represented by the September 11 attacks. We stand against al-Qaida's international terrorism based on fundamentalism. In another sense, this is a war for the sake of the Afghan people."

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They need help. At present, 44 countries are providing assistance."

1Q. In 2007, two Koreans were killed in Afghanistan by the Taliban. Because of that, the ROK is still reluctant to send its troops to Afghanistan.

"I do not think that Koreans' concerns are wrong. That kind of response is natural. The possibility of danger exists. However, we cannot prevent all danger. This is why we think that it is selfless of the ROK to return to Afghanistan and show its determination to help the Afghan people. So far, we have seen the ROK's selfless activities many times, and we are grateful for the ROK's decision (to dispatch troops.)"

STEPHENS